



Quality is Our Bottom Line

Public Health Committee Public Hearing

Monday, February 23, 2015

Connecticut Association of Health Plans

Testimony in Opposition to

SB 246 AA Defining and Establishing Standards for the Practice of Telemedicine SB 467 AAC the Facilitation of Telemedicine HB 6487 AAC Standards for Telemedicine Services

The Connecticut Association of Health Plans respectfully opposes SB 246 and urges the Committee's caution with respect to SB 467 and HB 6487.

Given the "proposed" status of the legislation, the intent of SB 467 and HB 6487 is somewhat vague, but to the extent that any of bills propose to restrict access to telemedicine services and/or to mandate a particular rate reimbursement structure like *the companion bill reported out of the Insurance Committee (SB 5)*, the Association would respectfully urge the Committee's rejection.

Health insurance carriers very much *support* the concept of telemedicine or telehealth which can be employed in a variety of ways including:

- Virtual visits: medical evaluations, psych assistance, or clinical peer to peer consultation.
- Case or care management under medical home delivery models.
- Adjuncts to home care service: electronic or telephonic monitoring for blood sugar, weight etc.
- Teleradiology: expert consultation in interpreting radiology reports.

Health plans are exploring some or all of the various initiatives outlined above and are bringing technology and social media to bear on behalf of their members. Carriers are looking to be innovators in the field of telemedicine, but fear passage of overly restrictive legislation that may impede their ability to expand access to quality, effective health care in a way that's affordable and convenient for consumers.

In addition, health plans are still navigating the practical considerations of telehealth such as assuring that services are delivered as indicated, that confidentiality of treatment is provided in accordance with the appropriate national and state standards and that outcomes actually prove beneficial. It's important that legislation not compromise these quality assurance efforts which unfortunately could be the unintended result if some of the proposals before you move forward.

We ask that the Committee hold the bills as noted. Many thanks for your consideration.